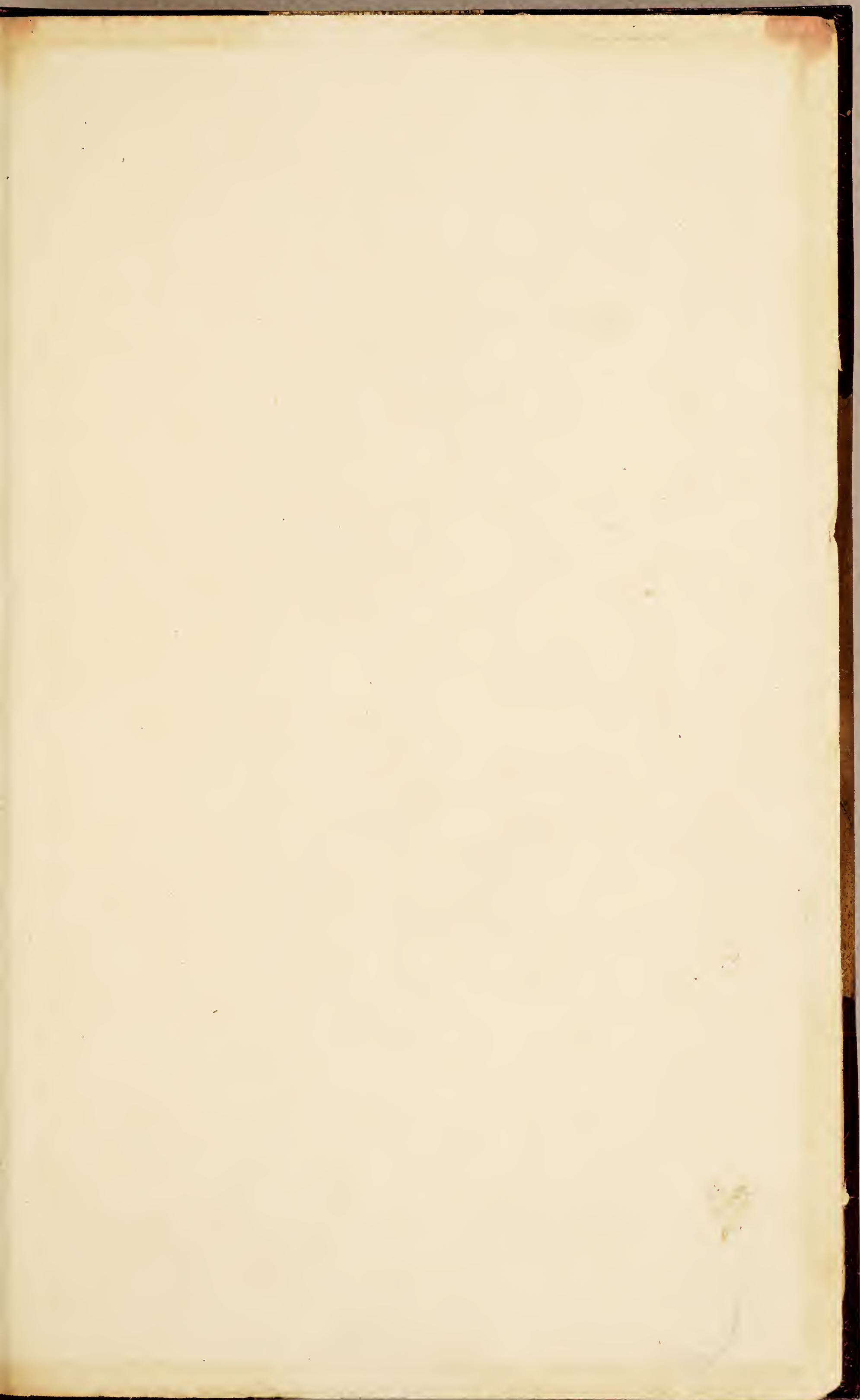




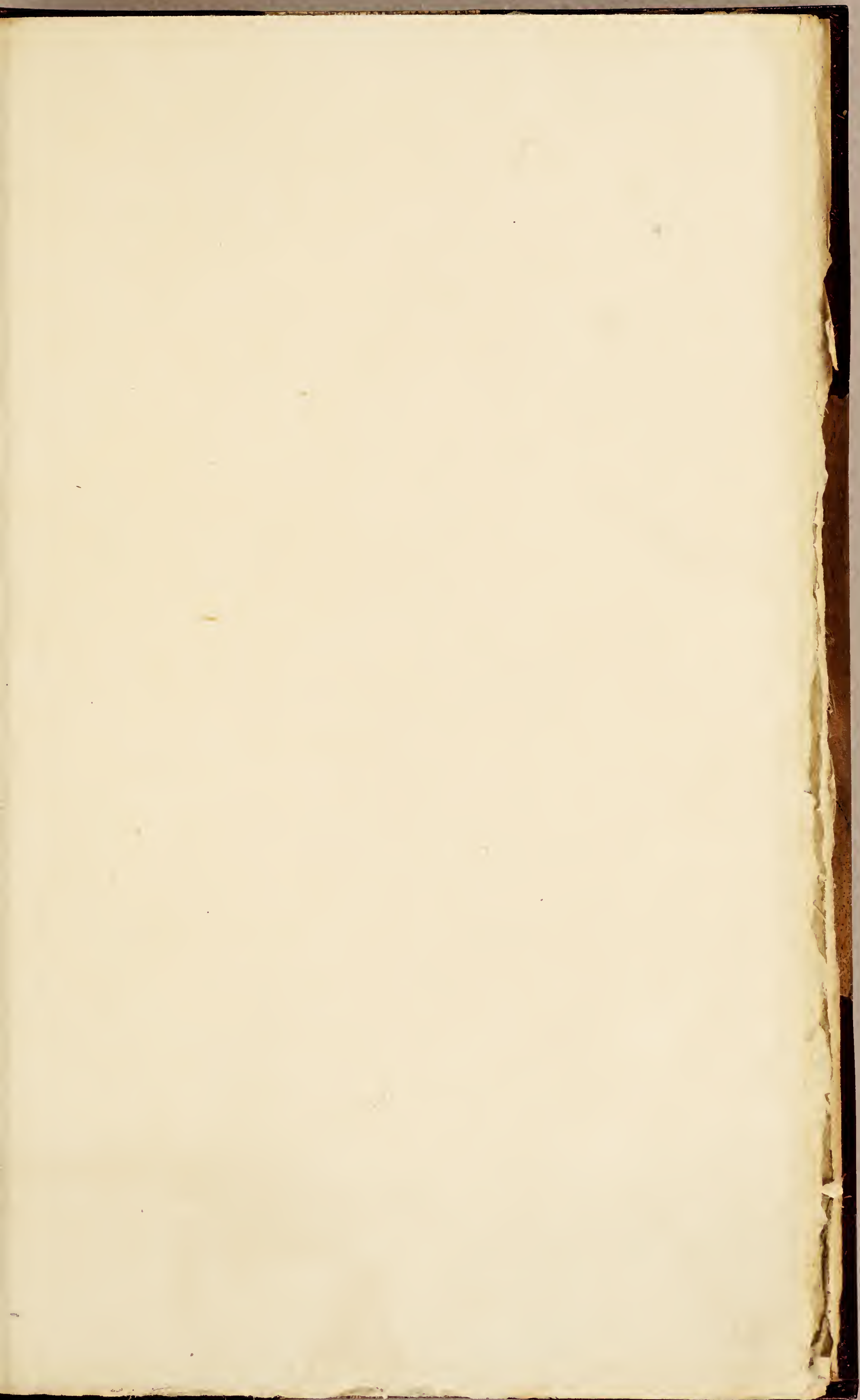
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THE
CONDUCT
OF THE
MINISTRY

Impartially Examined.

IN A
LETTER to the Merchants of *London*.

L O N D O N :

Printed for S. BLADON, in Pater-noster-row.

M D C C L V I.

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COMMERCIAL

WITNESS

Importantly

THE

Letter to the Merchants of London

TO THE

Members of the Society of Merchants

OF LONDON

(See Appendix)

CPICR

T H E
C O N D U C T
O F T H E
M I N I S T R Y

Impartially Examined.

In a Letter to the Merchants of London.

London, Oct. 26. 1756.

GENTLEMEN,

I HAVE thought fit to address the following discourse to you, both as patrons and judges of it, for these reasons. My design being to inquire, without prejudice or affection, into the part Great Britain has acted since this maritime war began, such an inquiry is most properly inscribed to a body of traders, who are so nearly concerned in its success, and who have so considerable a share as well in our foreign as domestic commerce. You are likewise very capable to pronounce on the real merit of my undertaking: for many among you are men of a liberal education; of large and extensive views; who have studied, and who understand the political system, not of this island only, but of Europe in general. Add to these things, that your residence in this great centre of business, your near and frequent opportunities of approaching those persons who administer the public, give you a distinguished rank of consideration

A ration

ration among your fellow-subjects. So that an appeal to you is, in effect, an appeal to the whole nation; and as such, Gentlemen, this is intended.

It is acknowledged, on all hands, that the present situation of our affairs is a very critical one. No man, therefore, can be an indifferent spectator of it, who is not, at the same time, insensible to his most important interests, to the present age, and to posterity. We are all embarked in one political vessel, where, though the steerage may be in other hands, the cargo is ours: and by consequence, while the storm is up, our lives and fortunes, our very being, as well as safety, are exposed to the same common dangers, and must share the same general fate.

If this great crisis calls loudly upon us, to examine how we have been brought into it; whether by real faults in our management, or by accidents unavoidable; such is the excellence of our constitution, that we may inquire with the utmost freedom. This still is, may it ever continue to be, the birthright of Englishmen! But then,

That such an inquiry may be useful, it must be calm, dispassionate, impartial. As to the decency to be observed in examining the conduct of other men, of our superiors more particularly; no one, who possesses, and who is conscious he deserves the character of an honest man, will break through that boundary, which both reason and self-regard have established. Public order, private security, all the relations we stand in to one another, require that this fence should be preserved sacred and inviolate. From writers of a different complexion, no man of sense can expect, and no man of honour would desire any thing else but scurrility and slander. Every knave, as well as every fool, is a leveller. Let not our own passions, much less the passions of such incendiaries, (who write letters to the public, in the same view their less criminal brothers do to private men,—that they

they may eat), inflame and mislead us. Let us not adopt that sinister zeal for the common welfare, which sometimes vents itself in vague, but furious declamations; sometimes in a malignant joy at public, though inevitable misfortunes; and is ever dealing forth half-truths, diminished or exaggerated, as may best serve the present purpose of malice, or levity, or revenge, or of all together. These volunteers in scandal, these little Drawcansir, who are ever railing at their betters, only because they dare do it, were never more numerous in any age or country. They swarm by thousands in this great city: they infest every place of common resort, from the chocolate-house to the night-cellar; and having no business of their own, are constantly regulating that of the state. I have seen some of them reduced to spell the very names of those persons they were beforehand resolved to abuse. Others, of more erudition, are daily pouring themselves out in lampoons, epigrams, advertisements, edicts. Never were the powers of dulness in greater or more universal commotion. Grubstreet has not only sent abroad her own aboriginal poets and hawkers, but has likewise pressed into her service, as assistant draughtsmen, card-ingravers, and gallows-makers, persons of another importance; who, though they have been humble enough, on this occasion, to wear her genuine livery, would yet think themselves injured in being supposed to assist her for hire or reward. Be then their decent and well-meant ingenuity its own recompense; and the true motives that inspire it, their peculiar distinction! To be more serious: The productions, as such, of these men could not, it is allowed, merit even this short animadversion, did not the obvious tendency of them all render it, in some sort, necessary. What that tendency is, every man amongst us, who is not the avowed enemy of all good discipline, of all political subordination, acknowledges and laments.

As to myself, Gentlemen, I dare avow the honest ambition of differing totally from all such authors, in the scope and aim of this letter.—For my talent as a writer, every scribbler may place me in reputation, if he pleases, immediately below his fellow-dunce; that is, immediately below nothing; an ingenious device, which I have often known practised by the fraternity. But it shall not be in their power to prove me guilty of what is alone material for your consideration; I mean, of intentionally asserting false facts, and of wilfully misrepresenting true ones.

I intend neither panegyric nor abuse; and I have no cause to serve, but that of truth, and of my country. If, therefore, in the course of this address, I any where impose upon you, I have been first unknowingly imposed upon myself. Be assured, however, that nothing in my power has been left undone, to avoid this misfortune; and that, on the contrary, I have exerted my best endeavours to procure every light, every information, which a private man could, by the most deliberate research, arrive at the knowledge of: and the result of this inquiry shall be fairly produced to you. When you have examined with attention the facts I relate, and have coolly weighed their importance, you will then, Gentlemen, determine equitably on the evidence before you; and the people of England will affirm your verdict.

But, before I enter upon this task, give me leave to take some little notice of a pamphlet which has been just now put into my hands; and which, I am told, has met with attention from the public, on account, I imagine, of the facts it is supposed to contain; for surely if I, who am no author, may venture to pronounce on the style, and manner of writing, both are below criticism.

The charge opens against the ministry, or rather against truth and matter of fact, with the following narrative, which you shall have in his own words; as

no other can be so fit to convey his meaning, and shew him in the true colours of a libeller.

“ In the year 1749, or 1750, some American
 “ traders, subjects of the King of Great Britain,
 “ travelled to the borders of the Ohio, to traffic with
 “ the natives of those parts. This being known to the
 “ Canadian French, messengers were dispatched to
 “ acquaint them, that, unless they withdrew from
 “ their master’s territories, their effects would be con-
 “ fiscated, and themselves carried to prison at Que-
 “ bec. This message the traders thought fit to obey,
 “ and withdrew in consequence of it.

“ The succeeding season, another company of
 “ British subjects came to trade on the Ohio: and
 “ not withdrawing on a like message with the former,
 “ their goods were confiscated, and themselves car-
 “ ried prisoners to Quebec; from whence they were
 “ brought to Rochelle in France, AND STILL DE-
 “ TAINED IN PRISON. Not conscious of having
 “ violated the laws of nations, or traded on any
 “ ground to which the King of Great Britain had not
 “ an undoubted right, they *remonstrated* to the Bri-
 “ tish ministry, *insisted* upon being claimed as British
 “ subjects, and honourably discharged from prison,
 “ as persons unoffending the laws of nations; nay,
 “ they *entertained* the *honourable hopes* of *Englishmen*,
 “ that the *ministry* of *England* would not cease to *de-*
 “ *mand* an *indemnification* for the loss of that mer-
 “ chandise which had been unjustly taken from them,
 “ and reparation for the insult and long imprison-
 “ ment of their persons: expectations becoming men
 “ who value their liberties, properties, and nation’s
 “ honour. *In this they were deceived; the true spi-*
 “ *rit of an English minister no longer dwelt amongst*
 “ *us.* The ambassador at Paris, *instead of demanding*
 “ *these subjects of his master, as men unjustly held in*
 “ *prison, and reparation for the wrongs they had re-*
 “ *ceived,* was ordered by the ministry to *solicit, as a*
 “ *favour*

“ *favour from the court of France, the discharge of*
 “ *them only, acknowledging their offence.*”

Thus he relates and circumstantiates the fact. And here I beg leave to remark, that when the circumstances, on which alone a charge is founded, are absolutely false, all reflections upon them must be utterly absurd and impertinent. But when those reflections, aimed too at persons of the highest rank, of the greatest eminence in this nation, are delivered in a style of the most indecent and furious railing; what name, Gentlemen, shall we bestow on their author; or what shall be said in reply to them? No more, I think, than what Beralde, in the *Malade Imaginaire* of Moliere, answers to the apothecary. *Allez, Monsieur; on voit bien que vous n'avez pas accoutumé de parler à des visages.* Here, however, they follow, in his own words still.

“ Were not your Sovereign's rights and your own
 “ privileges *shamefully given up*? Were not the lands
 “ on the Ohio *confessed to belong to France*? Were
 “ not the French justified in imprisoning your fel-
 “ low-subjects, and confiscating their effects, by this
 “ *tame* behaviour of the British minister?” He re-
 sumes the same subject, p. 8. and asserts, “ That the
 “ minister's *timidly* beseeching as a *favour* what he
 “ had a right to demand as *justice* from the French,
 “ has given that nation a better foundation to the
 “ claim of the Ohio.” In about fifteen lines lower,
 he asserts again, “ That the *timidity* of the minister
 “ gave the French no foundation at all.” But he
 has not yet done with this favourite topic. He goes
 on to say, “ If it be asked, Whence it comes to pass
 “ that this behaviour of the British minister has ne-
 “ ver been *mentioned* in the French *memorials rela-*
 “ *tive to the disputes in America*? it may be answer-
 “ ed, *with truth*, That they reserve it *only* between
 “ the British minister and themselves, lest a *public*
 “ *declaration* of this affair might *remove him* from the
 “ *administration,*

“ *administration*, and the French monarch lose an ally
 “ of greater consequence to his success, than any po-
 “ tentate in Europe!”

Here then we join issue: and let his credit with the public for veracity and candour, in whatever else he asserts through his libel, be determined by the truth or falsehood of the fact before us. This demand, Gentlemen, is fair and equitable: you see he affirms it in the most undoubting terms, and remarks upon it in a language that not even certainty itself could warrant. But to the point:

On a motion made to the Peers the 20th of *February* 1756, certain papers and letters concerning the incroachments of the French on his Majesty's subjects in North America, were laid before the house. As their authenticity is incontrovertible, I have only the easy task of copying them faithfully for your full satisfaction.

*Extract of a letter from the Earl of Albemarle
 to the Earl of Holderness.*

Paris, { 19th February, }
 { 1st March, } 1752.

“ I must acquaint your Lordship, that, in the
 “ month of November, I received a letter from
 “ three persons, signing themselves, *John Patton*,
 “ *Luke Erwin*, and *Thomas Bourke*, representing
 “ to me, that they were Englishmen, who had been
 “ brought to Rochelle, and put into prison there,
 “ from whence they wrote; having been taken by
 “ the French subjects, who seized their effects, as
 “ they were trading with the English and other In-
 “ dians on the river Ohio, and carried them prisoners
 “ to Quebec; from whence they have been sent over
 “ to Rochelle, where they are hardly used. Upon
 “ this information I applied to Mr St Contest, and
 “ gave

“ gave him a note of it, CLAIMING THEM as the
 “ KING’S SUBJECTS, and DEMANDING their liber-
 “ ty, and the RESTITUTION of their effects that
 “ had been *unjustly* taken from them.

“ These three persons, I find by the paper your
 “ Lordship has sent me, are of the number of those
 “ demanded of the French by Mr Clinton, and na-
 “ med in Mr de la Jonquiere’s letter. I have wrote
 “ to a merchant at Rochelle to inquire after them,
 “ and to supply them with money to make their jour-
 “ ney hither, if they are not gone, that I may re-
 “ ceive from them all the informations necessary. On
 “ my seeing Mr St Contest next Tuesday, I will re-
 “ present the case to him in *obedience* to his Majesty’s
 “ commands, that la Jonquiere may have *positive or-*
 “ *ders* to desist from the *unjustifiable* proceedings com-
 “ plained of; to *release* any of his Majesty’s subjects
 “ he may still detain in prison, and make *ample resti-*
 “ *tution* of their *effects*. And I shall take care to
 “ shew him the *absolute necessity* of sending *instructions*
 “ to their several governors, not to *attempt* any such
 “ *incroachments* for the future.”

*Extract of a letter from the Earl of Albemarle
 to the Earl of Holderness.*

26th February, }
 8th March, } 1752.

“ I am now to acquaint your Lordship, that I saw
 “ Monsieur Rouille yesterday; and that having drawn
 “ up a note of the *several complaints* I had *received*
 “ *orders* to make of la Jonquiere’s conduct, I deli-
 “ vered it to him, and told him, in general, the con-
 “ tents of it; *insisting* on the necessity, for preserving
 “ the good understanding betwixt his Majesty and the
 “ Most Christian King, of *sending such positive orders*
 “ to all their governors, as might *effectually prevent*,
 “ for

“ for the future, any such incroachments on his Ma-
 “ jesty’s *territories*, and *committing* such *violences* on
 “ his *subjects*, as had been done in the past.

“ I added to my remonstrance, that I hoped they
 “ would be taken into consideration quickly, that he
 “ might be able to give me an answer next week, or
 “ as soon afterwards as he possibly could. This mi-
 “ nister told me, he would use his best endeavours
 “ for that purpose; assured me it was the intention
 “ of his court to prevent any disputes arising that
 “ might tend to alter the present correspondence be-
 “ tween the two nations; and that I might *depend* up-
 “ on such *orders* being sent to their governors accor-
 “ dingly.

“ Of the *three men* I mentioned to your Lordship
 “ in my letter of last week, that had been brought
 “ *prisoners* from Canada to Rochelle, *whom I sent*
 “ *for to come to Paris*, TWO of them are ARRIVED,
 “ and the THIRD is GONE to London. I will take
 “ such informations from them as may be necessary
 “ for my own instruction, to *support* their *receiving*
 “ *satisfaction* for the injuries that have been done
 “ them.”

*Translation of part of the memorial delivered by
 Lord Albemarle to Mr Rouille, on the 7th of
 March 1752.*

* “ As to the fort which the French have under-
 “ taken to build on the river Niagara, and as to the
 “ six Englishmen who have been made prisoners, Lord
 “ Albemarle is *ordered* by his court to *demand*, that
 “ the

* Quant à la forteresse que les François ont enterpris de con-
 struire sur la riviere Oniagara, et aux six Anglois qui ont été ar-
 retés, Milord Albemarle est chargé par sa cour de demander,
 que des ordres les plus exprés soient envoyés à Mr de la Jon-
 quiere,

“ the most express orders be sent to Mr de la Jon-
 “ quiere, to desist from such unjust proceedings; and in
 “ particular to cause the fort above mentioned to be
 “ immediately rased; and the French, and others in
 “ their alliance, who may happen to be there, to re-
 “ tire forthwith: as likewise, to set the six English-
 “ men at liberty, and to make them ample satisfaction
 “ for the wrongs and losses they have suffered: and,
 “ lastly, that the persons who have committed these
 “ excesses, be punished in such a manner as may serve
 “ for an example to those who might hereafter ven-
 “ ture on any like attempt.”

I have now, Gentlemen, let you into the truth of this transaction; which the pamphleteer assures you was little known, till he explained, that is, till he falsified it in every particular but one, and that nothing at all to the purpose of calumny. Is this then the advocate of the people of England? Is it thus he informs our judgments first, to let our passions afterwards on the side of truth and public spirit?

*Non tali auxilio nec defensoribus istis
 Tempus eget.*

I had intended to drop this writer here; but, on looking into the very next page of his pamphlet, I find that the second fact he asserts is stated as falsely and ignorantly as this, which you have seen so unanswerably confuted. It is concerning the Ohio company. To pass over the miserable puerilities of the

quiere, de se desister des procedés aussi injustes; et particuliere-
 ment de faire raser immediatement la forteresse dont il est que-
 stion, et de faire retirer les François, ou autres peuples, leur al-
 liés, qui s'y trouveroient: comme aussi de faire rendre aux six
 Anglois et leur liberté et une ample réparation des torts et des
 pertes qu' on leur a fait souffrir: et enfin, que les personnes qui
 ont commis ces excès, soient punis d'une maniere à servir d'ex-
 ample à ceux qui auroient envie à l'avenir de faire une pareille
 tentative.

French

French King and Scylla, of a Quaker and Charybdis, with which he aims at enlivening his tale, I will state the fact shortly and truly; by which you will find, Gentlemen, that he had not the smallest knowledge of the affair he was writing about; that he is utterly unacquainted with the nature and forms of business; and that no blame, in this matter, can be possibly imputed to the minister, whom he has abused with such a profusion of low and illiberal malice; nor to any other person in the administration.

In the year 1747, Sir William Gooch, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia, acquainted the board of trade, that he had been lately much solicited by several persons in partnership, for grants of lands lying on the western side of the great mountains; and begged of their Lordships to be informed of the royal pleasure on that head. Hereupon his Majesty, by order in council, was pleased to refer it to the board of trade, with directions to consider, whether it might be for his service, and the advantage of the colony, to empower the Lieutenant-Governor to make such grants of lands. In 1748 the board of trade made their report, and gave it as their opinion, That the settlement of the country lying to the westward of the great mountains in the colony of Virginia, will be for his Majesty's interest, and the advantage and security of that and the neighbouring provinces; in as much as the British subjects will be thereby enabled to cultivate a friendship, and carry on a more extensive commerce with the nations of Indians inhabiting those parts: and such settlements may likewise be a proper step towards disappointing the views, and checking the incroachments of the French, as it will interrupt part of the communication by lodgments on the great lakes to the river Mississippi. Their Lordships therefore were of opinion, that all due encouragement ought to be given to the extending the British settlements beyond the great mountains; and submit, whether it may not be

advisable to empower the Lieutenant-Governor to make the grants desired, upon condition—That four years be allowed them to survey, and pay rights for the lands, upon the return of the plans to the secretary's office; and that a fort be built, and a garrison placed, at the expence of the grantees.

This report having been taken into consideration by the Lords of the committee of council, they agreed in opinion with the board of trade; and directed that board to prepare a draught of an instruction to the Lieutenant-Governor conformable to their report; which was accordingly done, and laid before the council.

In the mean time, a petition was presented to the King by Mr Hanbury, in behalf of himself, and several others, for settling the countries upon the Ohio; praying that his Majesty would be pleased to encourage the undertaking, by directing the Governor of Virginia to grant them a certain tract of ground; on condition, among others, of their seating a certain number of families upon the land, and erecting a fort, and maintaining a garrison, for the protection of the settlement.

This petition being referred to the board of trade, it appeared to them, that the former application was part of the present proposal, and made by the same persons; and that it might be for his Majesty's service to comply with it. Accordingly the draught of an instruction was approved in council, and transmitted to the Lieutenant-Governor.

The President of the council of Virginia, in a letter to the board of trade in 1749, after setting forth the difficulties the Ohio company laboured under, from the fickleness of the Indians, the claims of the Pennsylvanians with respect to limits, the expence of erecting and garrisoning a fort, &c. begs for some further indulgences; and shews, that the French claim to the Mississippi is not just, as being contrary to the original

nal grant of Charles I. to Sir Robert Heath, which was followed by a settlement of the English long before the French had been in those parts.

It does not appear that any further application was made by the Ohio company with respect to their grant till 1754; when they presented a petition to his Majesty, reciting the former transactions, and their proceedings since his Majesty's instructions relative to their grants; and setting forth the difficulties they had met with; and, among others, that the late governor and council had made out large grants to private persons, to the amount of near 1,400,000 acres; which lands not being properly described and limited, might have interfered with the lands discovered and chosen by the company: they therefore pray, that, upon conditions specified in the petition, their bounds may be fixed by certain rivers, &c. which they name.

But it appearing to the board of trade, that the limits mentioned in the petition would include too great a quantity of land, their Lordships were of opinion, that it should not be complied with; and they proposed some instructions to the Governor relative to this affair in their report. *But this report still remains under the consideration of the council; and no order at all has been made on it to this day.*

I now descend at once into the subject of this letter, by observing, that it were an absolute waste of your time, to shew you either the justice or the necessity of the present war, on our part. It is fresh in every man's remembrance, that the whole body of our people, the commercial part more especially, were unanimous, and even clamorous for it; as a war to be made in support of our own interests solely, without any bias towards those of ungrateful or indolent allies. The current of parliament too ran violently the same way: and the administration would have been looked upon as enemies to their country, had they opposed, or even retarded this favourite measure. They
did

did neither. They seized the first justifiable occasion of beginning it; and they supported what was thus begun, with all the alacrity of preparation, and all the vigour of execution. Let the facts, for those alone are evidence, prove this assertion, in detail.

In the beginning of January 1755, the Duke of Mirepoix returned to England, with the greatest professions of the sincere desire of his court, to adjust, finally and expeditiously, all disputes subsisting in America between the two crowns. It was, therefore, with the utmost surprise, that our sovereign received, at this very time, undoubted intelligence of the French having actually dispatched orders to Brest and Rochfort for arming a considerable fleet; without any communication made by the court of Versailles, or their ambassador, to his Majesty, of its object or destination. This mysterious and extraordinary step, on the part of France, could not fail to be attended with a general alarm here; and made it indispensably necessary for the King, to cause such a number of ships of war to be equipped, as might frustrate any attempts of France, and protect, at the same time, the British rights and dominions. This was done. The utmost efforts were exerted; and with such success, that, before the end of April, our fleet was ready to put to sea. It actually sailed too the 22d of that month, under the command of Vice-Admiral Boscawen. The strength of his squadron was as follows.

Guns.					
Of	74	2	} 11 Line. }	Ships. 12	Men. 5945
	70	3			
	64	1			
	60	4			
	50	1			
	Sloop	1	Frigate.		
May the 9th, sent with dispatches					
	24	1			140

We had at the same time, without leaving our coasts unguarded or exposed, a reinforcement in readiness to follow the Vice-Admiral; as it in fact did, upon the earliest intelligence of the French fleet being sailed from Brest.

May the 11th, sailed with Rear-Admiral Holburne,

Guns.			Ships.	Men.
Of				
74	1	} 6	7	3170
70	4			
60	1			
24	1 1			

This was about eight days after Monsieur de Macnamara sailed, with eighteen ships of the line and eight frigates, which had been fitted out at Brest and Rochfort.

You all know, that Monsieur de Macnamara, after being out at sea some days, returned with six ships of the line and three frigates. So that seventeen proceeded to North America: whereof three of the line and three frigates were *armés en guerre*: ten were only *armés en flute*, as they term it; that is, they had no other than their upper-deck guns, and served as transports to carry their troops. The seventeenth was to be used as an hospital-ship.

As the British Squadron sailed ten days before the French, it was improbable that they should meet on the European seas; but they saw, and fell in with each other more than once, on the coast of North America.

Before we mention what happened there, I beg to be indulged in making one or two remarks, which the subject we are upon naturally suggests. Every child in politics knows—that, after receiving orders as to the nature of the service he is to be employed in, and as to his general destination, the commanding officer, in all very distant expeditions, is, and must be intrusted with a discretionary power; first to chuse
such

such particular stations as may be most proper to effect the business intended; and to vary them afterwards, according as different exigencies arise, or as the earliest intelligence he can obtain may render it advisable. Now, that such was the general purport and tenor of the orders given to every admiral, for every service since the commencement of this war; and that there was nothing, in their most secret instructions, contradictory to what is here advanced, may be affirmed, with the severest regard to truth. But you must be sensible, that, to lay before the public instructions of such a nature, even were it in my power to do so, is a step of too delicate a nature for any private man to take. However just they may be in themselves, however warranted by the laws of reason and self-defence, the war that occasioned them is still carrying on. To men of sense and honour no more needs be said on this head at present: and, were I enabled to lay before readers of a different character, all that truth would warrant me in saying, but that prudence forbids, it would avail nothing. You are already persuaded, that cavil and abuse, not information, is all they wish to find on any subject, even on those where our nearest and most essential interests are to be discussed.

My second remark is, That whenever an administration makes use of means duly proportioned to the end proposed, and chuses, for obtaining such end, men of acknowledged abilities in their profession, fully instructed and empowered to act, they have done their duty; and, however unfortunate the issue may be, they stand acquitted of all demerit to the public. No minister was ever supposed to be the master of events: and the sea—(is it necessary I should make so trite an observation, Gentlemen?)—continues the most inconstant of all the elements. If our Vice-Admiral could not intercept the whole French fleet, either in its passage to North America, or in its re-
turn

turn to Europe; is the Atlantic no wider than the channel between Dover and Calais? Are there no storms to vex, no dark nights, no excessive and continuing fogs to obscure that immense ocean, and to render the taking, or even seeing an enemy's ships, impossible? But they did not all escape his vigilance. Both squadrons saw and fell in with each other more than once on the American coast; though the fogs, so frequent and thick in that latitude, separated them before they could come near enough to engage. One part, however, he came up with; and took two ships, the *Alcide* and the *Lys*, of 64 guns each; the latter having on board four companies of the Queen's regiment, four of the regiment of Languedoc; and, divided betwixt both, about 7600 l. Sterling, for the payment of the troops.

Mr Boscawen was joined on the 21st of June by Rear-Admiral Holburne. The same day he advanced within a mile of Louisburg harbour; and seeing there four large ships and two frigates, he knew that Monsieur du Perrier had outailed him, and was safe in port. He then proceeded to his rendezvous, being the best adapted for preventing the squadron under Monsieur de la Motte from getting into the gulf of St Lawrence; though this too, under cover of fogs, and by hard gales of wind, had the good fortune to arrive at the place of its destination. The ships under Mr Boscawen's command becoming now very sickly, he went to Halifax, there to send on shore and refresh the sailors that were no longer fit for service: and he left Rear-Admiral Holburne with five or six ships cruising off Louisburg. But the same distempers began to discover themselves, and to spread amongst this part of our fleet likewise; Mr Holburne burying no less than two hundred men out of his own ship; and, in the whole squadron, we lost upwards of two thousand. This was owing to the severity of the weather at their first coming upon the coast, and

to the pernicious humidity of the fogs, which commonly inflames, and renders mortal, the fever attending seamen at the first fitting out of a fleet.

That part of the French Squadron which had gone to Quebec, escaped back to Europe, in the month of September, through the streight of Belleisle. By this streight is to be understood the channel which separates Newfoundland from the continent of America, running north-west and south-west; an unfrequented and very hazardous navigation, which had never before been attempted by any fleet or Squadron of ships. Whilst Mr Holburne continued cruising before Louisburg, the strong gales of wind at the fall of the year often drove him many leagues to leeward, which gave the French an opportunity of coming out as they did. On the 20th of September he came up with three of their ships; one of which separated from the rest, and was chased, though she could not be overtaken, by the Centurion and Litchfield. The Edinburgh, Dunkirk, and Norwich, pursued the other two, and the Dunkirk came near them, but directly to windward; so that, as there was no prospect of assistance from the rest, she was called off by the Admiral. The other ship that had been left at Louisburg, I mean the *Esperance*, of 74 guns, was taken in her return to Brest by some of those under the command of Rear-Admiral West.

This, Gentlemen, is a plain deduction of facts, naked of all ornament and artifice. On one hand, nothing has been kept back from your view, by being thrown into shades: nothing, on the other, has been brought forwards, to be set in a light too strong or too advantageous. Though of these two vitious extremes, the last, as things are at present circumstanced, would be perhaps the most pardonable fault: for I should rank myself among the worst of mankind, as not deserving the common benefits of air and water, much less the privileges of a free *Briton*, if, from
levity

levity or malice, I should debase my pen so far, as to unsettle the affections of my fellow-subjects, by spreading lies of men, merely because they are ministers; or to inflame the calamities of my country, merely to shew my talent in ridicule and ribaldry. *Hic niger est*: and the people of England would have more reason to be on their guard against the infusions of such a writer, than against the miscreant who had betrayed his friend, or attempted the life of his father. But let us now proceed to inquire what was doing in the mean while nearer home.

Our object, as you have seen, was the intercepting of the French fleet. The same plan which had succeeded so well in the last war, was pursued in this; the same officers who had distinguished themselves then, were employed now; but the issue was still uncertain, and in the hands of Providence alone. That the administration, therefore, during those five or six months of uncertainty, might leave nothing undone on their part, it was resolved to stop all French ships homeward or outward bound, and bring them into our ports: and thus, if the expedition to America should not fully answer our expectations, we should yet have in our hands the greatest number possible of their vessels and sailors, who would, otherwise, most undoubtedly be employed against us. May I for once assume the tone so common to the rabble of our politicians, and assert positively, that our safety, at that very hazardous conjuncture, was owing solely to this measure? Instead of this, I will only beg leave to remark, that had the *three hundred ships*, and *eight thousand seamen*, taken by us before Christmas, arrived safe in France, they might have transported hither so formidable a force, and in so short a time, that those who have since pretended to ridicule the attempt, would have been, at that moment, the first to tremble at it.

But the damage we have occasioned to their com-
C 2
merce,

merce, by pursuing this measure, deserves a particular consideration. It cannot be denied, that, while our own trade never was better nor more generally protected, in any period during a war, the trade of our enemies never suffered more, at the same time. The consequence of which has been, that the advanced price of insurance upon merchant-ships since the commencement of the present war is very inconsiderable on our part; and that the French are under a necessity of insuring theirs, the outward-bound at 30 to 35 *per cent.* and the homeward-bound at 40 to 55 *per cent.*—a load so unequal and ruinous, that the most flourishing commerce must sink under it soon, perhaps irrecoverably. This their merchants foretold; and it is the true source of that aversion from the war, and of those uneasy murmurings which have spread themselves from the most remote provinces to the capital, from the very peasants to the first parliament of their monarchy.—But let us intermit for a while such remarks as these, however true and pertinent; as this seems a proper place, Gentlemen, to set before you, in one view, an abstract of all the squadrons sent out by the Admiralty, for this and other indispensable services, from the month of April 1755, to the beginning of the same month 1756 inclusively. You have already been told, that Vice-Admiral Boscawen sailed for North America, on the 22d of April 1755, with the following ships, *viz.*

Guns.			Men.
Of	74	2	
	70	3	
	64	1	
	60	4	
	50	1	
	Sloop	1	
Carried forward			5495

Brought forward - Men 5495
 May 9. sent with dispatches,
 Guns.

24 1 - - - 140

And that he was reinforced by Rear-Admiral Holburne on May 11. with

Of	74	1	} 6 }	- -	3170
	70	4			
	60	1			
	24	1			
					8805

On the 24th of July 1755, sailed with Sir Edward Hawke, to cruise to the westward, and followed him shortly after,

	Guns.		
Of	90	2	} 18 Two of these followed him the beginning of August.
	80	2	
	74	1	
	70	8	
	66	1	
	60	3	
	50	1	
	44	1	
	Sloop	1	

Sailed at the same time to cruise to the westward,

Of	70	1
	60	1

And a few days afterwards,

Of	60	1
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On the 29th September 1755, Sir Edward Hawke returned into port with some of his squadron. Some came in about ten days before, and two or three of them a few days afterwards.

On

On the 14th of October 1755, Vice-Admiral Byng sailed from St Helen's to cruise to the westward. His squadron, including such ships as were sent out after him, was as follows.

Guns.		
Of	90	1
	74	1
	70	1
	66	1
	64	1
	60	5
	50	2
	44	1
	24	3
	Sloops	2

About the middle of November 1755, Vice-Admiral Boscawen returned to England, with thirteen sail of the line, and two frigates.

On the 22d of the same month, Vice-Admiral Byng returned to Spithead; and most of his squadron entered into port about the same time. One of the 70 gun ships came in the 4th of November; one did not return till the 9th of December; and two continued out four days after that.

On the 30th of January 1756, Vice-Admiral Osborne sailed, to cruise to the westward, with the following ships.

Guns.		
Of	70	10
	66	1
	60	1
	50	1
	Sloop	1

On the 16th February, he returned with them to Spithead.

On

On the 12th March 1756, Sir Edward Hawke failed, to cruise to the westward from St Helen's, with part of the following ships, and was joined by the others off Plymouth.

Guns.		
Of	90	1
	74	1
	70	7
	60	3
	50	2
	24	3
	Sloop	1
		14

On the 6th April 1756, Admiral Byng failed for the Mediterranean from St Helen's, with the following ships.

Guns.		
Of	90	1
	74	1
	70	3
	66	1
	64	2
	60	2
		10

Having thus laid before you, which any man may verify even from the common news-papers, a list of the ships employed, at different times, and in different services, during the last year, and the beginning of this; it may not be unnecessary here to take some notice of the cruise made by our western squadron, as much licentious invective hath been thrown out at random on that topic, by those who of all men knew least what they were to condemn or approve.

The design in sending out this squadron was, not only to endeavour the intercepting of Du Guay's, but those likewise of La Motte and Salvert, in case they should escape our fleet in North America. Du Guay

Guay having gone to Lisbon and Cadiz, where he wasted much time, rendered the conjecture extremely probable that he was to join those other squadrons in their return at some fixed rendezvous; and by that means secure their safe entry into the ports of France. It was therefore judged prudent to send out a squadron sufficient to intercept them in case of their junction: and it was left to the discretion of the Admiral to keep in such station as would most effectually prevent their getting into harbour; unless, from any intelligence he might receive, he should find it necessary to proceed to the southward, as a more probable station to meet them. But Du Guay, on coming back, kept out in the ocean, much to the westward of Cape Finisterre, till he came into the latitude of Brest. There he continued cruising till the wind was fair, and gave him an opportunity of running down the latitude directly into port; by which he escaped the vigilance of our squadron then crossing the bay of Biscay: and the ships from North America returning by themselves, one was taken; another of greatly superior force engaged by one of our cruising frigates; and a third escaped, by our ship that chased carrying away her topmast.

These different and necessary steps on the part of Great Britain, produced, and could not fail of producing in the French an ardent desire of revenge. You well remember the critical situation of this country during the last winter. Their squadrons, after only a common passage to and from America, in which by consequence they could have suffered very little, were all returned, and in harbour. Great bodies of their troops were drawn down, and spread themselves along the coasts of Picardy, Normandy, and Britany, threatening a descent either in this island or Ireland. Of this we had repeated and sure intelligence. We knew likewise that they meditated an invasion of Minorca; which, by the treaty of Utrecht, they had solemnly

solemnly guarantied to England against all powers whatever. I say, that all this was early known to the government; who therefore were not so ill informed as hundreds, that do not believe what they publish, have dared to assert; nor will they be found so reproachably negligent in their preparations, as well-meaning credulity in some, misled by the insidious malice of a few, has been unfortunately persuaded to believe. But were the writer of this letter actually possessed of all the secret intelligence necessary to prove what is here asserted, the exposing of such intelligence at this time would be premature and hazardous. It would be to copy after the pernicious example of some other writers, who, while they pretend to inform you, afford real and dangerous information only to your enemies. Let it suffice, then, for the present to say, that by a letter from abroad, dated the 24th of last December, which I accidentally read in the original, it appeared the French were then going upon the equipment of a squadron at Toulon; and that this squadron was to consist of twelve ships of the line. Those ships were, in effect, got ready in about two months after the intelligence came; and sailed to support the attack upon Minorca, where they arrived the 18th of April.

Our Mediterranean squadron, under Admiral Byng, had put to sea from the road of St Helen's * twelve days before; and arrived in three and forty days † off the same island.

Here, doubtless, it will be, as it has been often already asked, Why there was not a squadron in the Mediterranean early enough to have blocked up the French fleet in port, or to have intercepted it in its passage to Minorca? and why, for this most necessary service, it did not sail from hence by the beginning of March at the latest? It will be asked again, Why this squadron, even when joined with the three alrea-

* April 6.

† May 19.

dy in those seas, was superior in number to the French fleet by only one ship of the line? I have stated the questions fairly, Gentlemen, and I will answer them with the strictest regard to truth.

To do this effectually, it is proper to take a review of the state of our navy during the autumn and a part of the winter 1755. In those months thirty-one ships of the line had been employed in cruising to the westward; as you may satisfy yourselves, by casting your eyes back on the list already laid before you. These had, almost all, returned into port, distressed by sickness, and otherwise in a very disabled condition. For, from the unseasonable weather, they had suffered extreme damage in their masts, sails, yards, and rigging.

Vice-Admiral Boscawen, with the ships under his command, to the number of thirteen of the line, did not return from North America, till about the middle of November. Among those several were in bad condition; most of them had suffered greatly in their masts, yards, rigging; as the whole squadron was quite bare of stores, and very deficient in their complements, by death and severe illnesses among the sailors. This was the shattered state of almost our whole fleet at home. To this true, but melancholy detail, must be added that uninterrupted series of storms and turbulent weather under every appearance, which, till near the end of January, cruelly distinguished the last from every preceding winter, for almost forty years backwards. These inevitable accidents greatly retarded the cure of our sick men, as well as obstructed the refitting our ships, and bringing them again into a proper condition for service. Considerable numbers too had died during the winter, or were become unfit for duty, or had deserted: so that, though all the accustomed methods of manning a fleet had been exhausted, and others not commonly used, put in practice; yet still the progress made, towards completing
the

the numbers wanted, was very unequal to the necessity. To this train of unhappy circumstances it was owing, that only twenty-five ships of the line, excluding three destined for convoys with our outward-bound trade, could possibly be got ready for service by the middle of January *. Of these twenty-five, thirteen were ordered to sea, under Mr Osborne, to accompany the convoys just now mentioned, into a proper latitude westward, for their security against whatever the French squadron at Brest might attempt against them. They sailed January the 30th, and returned to Spithead sixteen days afterwards.

In twelve days † from their return, a squadron under Sir Edward Hawke, consisting of fourteen ships of the line, with three frigates, and a sloop, appointed to attend some East-India ships into the ocean, and then to cruise off Brest, was got ready to put to sea, though the weather prevented their sailing till near the middle of March ‖.

Now, it appears, by a true state of our fleet, that not fewer than forty-nine ships were employed at the beginning of this month, for indispensable home-services, whereof eighteen were of the line, and thirty-one were frigates, &c. These had their stations in the Downs and parts adjacent, or on the opposite coasts of France; or were employed as convoys, and in raising men; or actually cruising to the westward. It appears likewise from the same list, that, at this time, there remained in port, not under orders to proceed to sea, forty-six ships of the line; and of them only twenty were in condition for service, had their due numbers of men been complete; but in these they were deficient by two thousand two hundred and fifty-six. The complements of the other twenty-six ships amounted to thirteen thousand two hundred and sixty; of which they mustered no more than five thousand seven hundred and forty-eight. But from this num-

* Jan. 16. † Feb. 28. ‖ March 12.

ber, deducting the officers, petty officers, and servants, there remained only about two thousand two hundred foremastmen: and as there could be no other immediate way of furnishing out the complements of the twenty ships, ready in all other respects; it is undeniably evident, that the doing so would have stripped the other twenty-six of almost all their foremastmen. Need I intreat, Gentlemen, your serious attention to these particulars? You see they are not rashly adopted from uncertain rumours or deceitful suggestions: they are all drawn from vouchers that will be their own undoubted evidence. Observe likewise, if you please, that the French, at the latter part of the winter, had between thirty and forty ships of 80, 74, and 64 guns; besides several from 60 to 50 guns, lately built and well-conditioned, in their ports of Brest and Rochfort. We knew they were exerting their utmost endeavours to get as many of them as was possible ready for the sea. We knew besides, as has been said before, that they were drawing down from different parts, formidable bodies of troops, and extending them along their coasts; and that they had a number of what is called small craft in several ports of their maritime provinces.

By this disposition of their force at land and sea, they had it continually in their power to insult this island, the very moment that our inferiority should furnish them the wished-for occasion. Had a descent been then attempted; had they even sacrificed fifteen or twenty thousand men in the attempt, what must have been the consequence to this great capital? I chuse, however, to throw a total veil over the scene in my eye: and you, Gentlemen, feel intimately my reasons for doing so. I know that this invasion has been treated, even by some men of sense amongst us, as chimerical; but I know too, that no good reason has ever been assigned by any man, for treating it as such.

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The administration indeed did not look upon it as a measure taken absolutely at Versailles, nor as the only one in the plan of that ambitious court. They were fully apprised of the preparations carrying on, during the same period, at Toulon: and they were aware, that either of these schemes might prove the feint or reality, might be carried into execution or dropped, just as our adversaries should find either most practicable and of surest execution. They might attack Minorca, we knew; or they might sail through the Streights of Gibraltar, either to succour their colonies in North America, or to put our fleet in the ocean betwixt the two fires of their Brest and Toulon squadron. Under these alternatives of danger and distress, when it is evident too, from the state of our navy above recited, that every possible evil could not be guarded against; would any thinking man, who weighs coolly the sum and consequence of things, have wished an administration to leave, at such a juncture, the head and heart of the commonwealth in greatest danger? those vital parts, where a wound is often mortal, most exposed, only to save a limb?

But our most vigorous endeavours, however, were used to secure this part of the British dominions likewise, as well as to send out an additional force, sufficient for the defence of our colonies. Orders were issued the 2d and 3d of March * for pressing men from all protections, and for laying an imbargo on all merchant-ships; to answer, by these extraordinary

* It has been asked, why such orders were not issued sooner? The answer is obvious and reasonable. March is the ordinary season for fitting out and for the departure of ships: and therefore had the general press begun sooner, or in any part of the winter, it would have had no other effect than only to alarm the men; drive them away into lurking-places up and down the country, from whence no encouragements could have drawn them afterwards: and thus a premature attempt would have in a great measure defeated the very purpose it was intended to serve.

methods,

methods, the urgent call for a sufficient number of hands. Ten sail of the line were ordered to be equipped forthwith for the Mediterranean, and quickly after six sail more were appointed for North America, the West Indies, and the coast of Africa. All which, as soon as they were ready, and the weather would permit, proceeded according to their several destinations. From this fair deduction of particulars, it follows clearly, that a squadron of equal strength could not have been sooner dispatched to the Mediterranean, consistently with that first and superior attention which is due to the security of this kingdom. And thus much in reply to the first question. I proceed now to consider the second popular objection that has been raised on the head we are still examining.

The ill success of our Mediterranean squadron has given occasion to say, that a greater force should have been sent. Let us see, then, whether we could have reasonably spared more ships at that time. And to judge of this, we must look impartially into the state of our fleet at home, just before the squadron in question put to sea.

Exclusive of it, and six ships more for the colonies, there remained either cruising or going to cruise, twenty-six, and in harbour twenty-four, not under sailing orders. Of the latter, nine only were otherwise ready, could they have been manned; but they wanted of their complement above eleven hundred; and the six ships designed for the colonies wanted three hundred and seventy-seven. The remaining fifteen of the twenty-four in harbour were either fitting or refitting. They mustered but about eight hundred foremastmen; near four hundred of which being wanted for the ships going to the colonies, there would remain scarce more than four hundred to be distributed amongst the nine ships, ready in all respects except men: a number not nearly sufficient for those nine. However, by stripping one ship of all her hands,

hands, it would have been just possible to man the other eight: and then, thirty-four ships of the line were the whole force we had to employ in services at home; of which it was now judged indispensably necessary to have nineteen cruising before Brest and Rochfort. We had sure intelligence, that the strength of our enemies was greatly increased in those parts; and that vigorous preparations were continued there for acquiring a strength still more formidable, which demanded a greater number of our ships to prevent or frustrate whatever might be attempted against these islands. Things standing thus, all the reasons above deduced, for not sending any ships to the Mediterranean before the 1st of March, remain here in full force, for not farther weakening now the fleet at home; more especially as there was not the least apparent necessity for our doing so. The ten sail from hence, with three already in those seas, composed a strength superior to any the French could have there, even according to the largest accounts: and, what might probably have insured success to it, no fleet was ever sent from England more completely equipped, manned with abler or better sailors. We knew likewise the real state of our enemy's fleet; that it was far from being equally well appointed with ours, or having its due complement of hands; and they too, for the most part, but the sweepings and refuse of Toulon, old men past service, or boys not yet grown up to it.

Before we conclude this head, let us stop a moment to make one reflection, which appears to me of importance. The greatest errors, in reasoning on the measures of an admiralty, arise from this supposition, that the real strength of the navy is to be estimated at all times, by the number of ships then in commission; and that every such ship can be constantly made ready to go out, and to remain always at sea. It is scarce to be credited, how generally this vulgar prejudice prevails,

vails, even among such persons, as, in other computations, are least subject to error. But it should ever be remembered by him who would impartially examine the conduct of an admiralty, that our naval strength ought not, at any time, to be rated by the number of ships in harbour, or even in commission; but only by that part of it which can be then effectually fitted out, and manned. Whatever ships remain incomplete in these respects, they are as useless for immediate service as if they were still in the forests, or on the mountains where they first grew. But to go on:

With such a squadron as you have seen above, Mr Byng sailed from Spithead to St Helen's the 3d of April, and from thence the 6th of the same month.

It is with equal shame and indignation that I pursue the sequel of this narrative; and I could wish what remains to be told buried in deep and lasting oblivion. Not for the sake of the men in power. Had I reason to believe them culpable, I should think the scene could not be exposed too strongly, nor painted in colours too hateful. But for the disgrace brought on the British flag, and the fatal disasters consequent on that disgrace, by ONE MAN's——but let the justice of the nation give it a name. Whoever puts himself upon his country, ought to have a fair and equal trial. To condemn the greatest supposed criminal, before such trial, were unjust; as to insult him otherwise, is ungenerous, and akin to the very cowardice it pretends to abhor.

The Admiral having delivered to the Governor of Gibraltar some dispatches containing the King's orders to him, that gentleman thought proper thereupon to call a council of war, May the 4th; and it appears, from the minutes of this council, that it met to deliberate—not on paying obedience to his Majesty's commands, which were express “for sending to Minorca
“ from

“ from the garrison at Gibraltar a detachment equal
 “ to a battalion;” but to consider “ the expediency
 “ of sending any detachment at all:” a case never
 intended here to come under their consideration. It
 was not, therefore, any supposed obscurity, any
 seeming contradiction in the letters writ by the Secre-
 tary at War; as has been since alledged, on which they
 assembled to debate. The orders contained in those
 letters were, and must have been fully understood by
 them: the questions proposed, and the resolutions
 taken, prove invincibly that they were so. Had it
 been otherwise, no such suppositions could have been
 made as were made; no such conclusions drawn from
 them as were drawn; and, in a word, there would
 not have been the shadow of common sense in all
 that passed on the occasion. Their resolutions were,
 first, “ That the relief of Minorca would be hazar-
 “ dous, perhaps impracticable.” Had our enemies
 reasoned in the same manner, Minorca had never
 been invaded; Fort St Philip’s never besieged.—
 “ Secondly, If the British fleet should be any way
 “ weakened by an engagement, Gibraltar would be
 “ in imminent danger.” But though the British
 fleet was afterwards weakened, because only one half
 of it had been suffered to engage the whole French
 squadron, yet it was not beat; and Gibraltar run no
 danger at all. Let us now proceed to see how this
 incredible event happened, and so conclude a letter,
 Gentlemen, which has insensibly swelled into a treatise.

The British squadron sailed from Gibraltar, May
 the 8th; and, after a passage of eleven days, arrived
 off Minorca on the 19th; at the very time when a
 commander of spirit and enterprise would have wish-
 ed it precisely to arrive; because such a commander
 had an opportunity then of engaging the enemy’s
 fleet, probably of ruining their whole undertaking,
 with most reputation to himself, and most glory to
 his country. Could a Greenville or a Drake arise,

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for a moment, from the dead, to pronounce upon this opinion, I am confident, by all they thought and acted upon similar occasions, that they would heartily confirm it. They would blush, at the same time, for a dastardly half-souled race amongst us, who treat all such notions as romantic and visionary. While this gallantry of courage, this nobleness of purpose prevailed in Britain, every scheme, that had been planned with spirit at home, was executed with answerable bravery and success abroad. But should contrary principles to these, should base and selfish views ever spread their contagion through our fleets and armies, we must, from that time, degenerate into a people of pirates and freebooters: and our very commanders, instead of soliciting employments, for the glorious dangers attending them, in order to do honour or procure safety to their country, will seek to wear the public livery from humbler motives; I mean the mere wages and vails such employments may procure them. Be this as it will,

No sooner had the French discovered *our* fleet bearing towards Minorca, than their Admiral, who best knew in what a hurry and with what unequal hands *his* squadron had been manned, sent to request a reinforcement from the Duke of Richlieu's camp before Fort St Philip's. His request was complied with: and a reinforcement, to the number of six hundred men, was immediately sent off, in several tartans, to his assistance. Now, can any thing confirm more evidently what I have oftener than once insinuated, of the condition in which their fleet put to sea? And with this incident too, Mr Byng, as appears by his letter, was fully acquainted some hours before he engaged it. There he tells us, that the morning proving hazy,—he means the morning of that day * which will be long remembered by the friends of Britain with pain, by her enemies with

* The 20th of May.

triumph,

triumph,—two of those very vessels fell in with the rear of our fleet; and one of them was actually taken by the *Defiance*, with two Captains, two Lieutenants, and one hundred and two private men. All the rest were obliged to return to their camp, without having been able to put a single soldier on board *Galissoniere's* fleet. This capture, you see, was particularly encouraging, and might have been interpreted, without much superstition, into an omen of still greater success. Had I said, into an assurance of victory, it had not, perhaps, been too much, when I consider, that every other circumstance, to confirm the bold or animate the fearful, concurred on our side; the sailors all in high spirits, the officers determined and eager to shew themselves Englishmen, and the gale blowing full in favour of our attack, without once changing or failing us for the rest of the day. We had time, likewise, to form our line of battle in good order, and to sail in it. As our fleet was to windward, it must tack of course; which it did all together, through the whole extent of the line, without one blunder, or one ship missing. The signal to engage was made about one o'clock; and Rear-Admiral West put immediately before the wind with his division, consisting of six ships; each ship selecting, as she sailed down, one of the enemy's; that they might all attack regularly, and without confusion. On our first advancing, the French fired to rake us: but, from an impatience that oftener indicates apprehension than intrepidity, making their discharge at too great a distance, they did our ships little or no damage. Before they could load again, ours were pretty well in with them, and returned their fire with greater execution. But, as only six of our ships, I mean the red division, were engaged against the whole French fleet, the match must needs be unequal: and, in effect, all the six were considerably hurt; the *Intrepide* more particularly. For, as she had the mis-

fortune to lose her foretopmast early; and as, by that accident, the French Admiral, with his two seconds, was upon her at once, who quickly demolished all her rigging and maintopmast, she lay in the sea almost a wreck, having received fourteen shot betwixt wind and water, and many through both sides. Thus unequally, though without once intermitting her fire, was she engaged for more than an hour and a half; till, at last, Captain Cornwall in the *Revenge*, and Captain Durell in the *Trident*, broke their station from Admiral Byng to put themselves between the *Intrepide* and her three antagonists.

But why the Admiral himself lay, all this while, astern, and so prevented his own division from advancing likewise to charge the enemy, although the same wind that had brought down one half of his fleet, continued still in the same quarter full and favourable for bringing down the other half—why, or how all this happened, I can give no account: and I will not indulge a humour of forming disadvantageous conjectures. On the contrary, I detest, from my soul, those instances of aversion to him, which have been so often and so shockingly exhibited in our public streets, by that many-headed monster, the rabble; and which, in truth, are a disgrace on our national character for good-nature and magnanimity. Another, and a more equitable tribunal, than that of popular fury, must determine what we are to think of this day's action, and of this gentleman's behaviour in it.

Here I had resolved to have laid down my pen, but a letter * of a very extraordinary tendency having lately appeared, I think myself obliged to make some few remarks upon it. Not for any thing material it contains; not on account of the seditious industry with which it has been dispersed into every quarter of this

* A letter to a member of parliament, relative to the case of Admiral Byng, with some original papers and letters, &c.

great city, and circulated through every province of the kingdom; but because the Admiral has made himself a party and an accomplice to it, by furnishing the writer with letters and papers, which he alone could furnish. Had this libel tended to his own vindication only, without charging on other people a guilt of the most flagitious nature, he should have enjoyed his whole benefit of clergy from it, without any censure, or even notice, on my part. But this anonymous advocate more than insinuates, that one or two ministers at least have devoted his client, as the scape-goat of their incapacity and iniquity; and that a dark design is formed to murder him, merely to screen themselves. Would it be too much, Gentlemen, to demand some little proof of so high a charge? of a crime so enormous? But, if he has produced none, not the smallest, neither from the letters themselves, nor from his comments on them, he stands already convicted of the guilt he imputes to others, as a stabber of reputations in the dark: and to men, sensible to good fame, such an assassination is worse than the loss of life itself. Or will he justify himself by saying, as Italian bravoes do, that it is his trade, and he must live by it? He is sure, besides, that Mr Byng's character would have stood fairer in the public eye, had his letter from the Mediterranean been, at first, published entire. Though I heartily wish it had, and am pleased it is so now; I yet differ totally in opinion from him, of its utility towards creating, in one man of unprejudiced sense, the least better opinion of the Admiral's understanding as a writer, or of his behaviour as a commander. Some few strictures on the added parts will be sufficient proof of what I now say.

After seven or eight pages of mere common-place invective, he proceeds to quote * the first passage omitted in the Gazette. Now I ask, whether this part of

* Page 9.

his

his client's letter—when I say client, I do not mean it in the legal sense—can be of the least advantage to his character? The contrary appears to me most evident. We find him already—that is, before the engagement—in despair of being able to do any thing towards the relief of *Minorca*.——“ Every one was “ of opinion we could be of no use to Gen. Blake- “ ney, as by all accounts no place was secured for a “ landing.” Is this the language of courage? Besides, we know since, that Mr Boyd went out, in an open boat, about this very time, in search of him; and returned to the castle without harm or interruption. And if he had then totally forgot, *other irreproachable witnesses* still remember, *the conversation that Col. Kane held with him formerly about the Sally-port, and on the very spot where it stands*—as a place of sure communication, through which not only intelligence, but succours might be sent into the fort, even when it should be actually besieged.

Page 10. he says, “ the Captain, Intrepide, and “ Defiance, were much damaged in their masts, so “ that they were endangered of not being able to se- “ cure their masts.” Now, the omission of this passage seems no way injurious to Mr Byng; for, whatever it may be at sea, it is not English at land. He goes on: “ The squadron in general were very sickly, “ many killed and wounded, and no where to put “ a third of *their number*, if I made an hospital of “ the forty-gun ship.” What can he possibly mean? Was an hospital-ship wanted for the killed? or even for the wounded? Or does an admiral put the sick of his squadron into an hospital-ship, unless, which is not pretended, there should be some epidemical and contagious distemper, the small pox or fever for instance, spread amongst them? Does there appear any malice to Mr Byng, in the omission of these particulars? And was the sickly condition of our fleet, sup-
posing

posing his account to be true, a secret fit to be trusted, at that time, with our domestic and foreign enemies?

In the next paragraph of the same page, he goes on to say, "He would make sure of protecting Gibraltar, since it was found impracticable either to succour or relieve Minorca." How could he possibly tell? He had recalled the Phoenix and Chesterfield, "before they could get quite *so near* the harbour as to make *sure* what *batteries* or guns might be *placed* to *prevent* our having any *communication* with the *castle*." Then he knew nothing of its being either practicable or impracticable to succour the castle; for he never made a second attempt, not even to send in a letter! And the garrison of Fort St Philip's never knew that he had engaged the French at all, till they were informed of it forty days afterwards by the French themselves. His advocate goes on to quote more—"For though we may justly claim the victory." This victory then was gained by six ships only; the other six of his own squadron not having been suffered to engage, till two of them broke away from their stations to prevent the Intrepide from being either sunk or taken. One cannot recal this scene, without feeling some emotions of honest indignation. Had he beat the French, had he given the *whole* British squadron a chance for doing it, Minorca had still been ours; and he had brought back to England a Marshal of France, with his army, our prisoners.

Whether the word "cover" Gibraltar was omitted or not, is immaterial to Mr Byng's vindication. It is besides glaringly absurd. Does he not say, in his letter of the 25th of May, "that he had gained a victory?" Did not some other hand, who has put his anger into tolerable English in a second letter, dated July 4. say still more affirmatively, "that he fought, met, attacked, and beat the enemy?" Now, could the French come to Gibraltar without their fleet? Or was a beaten fleet in condition to engage him

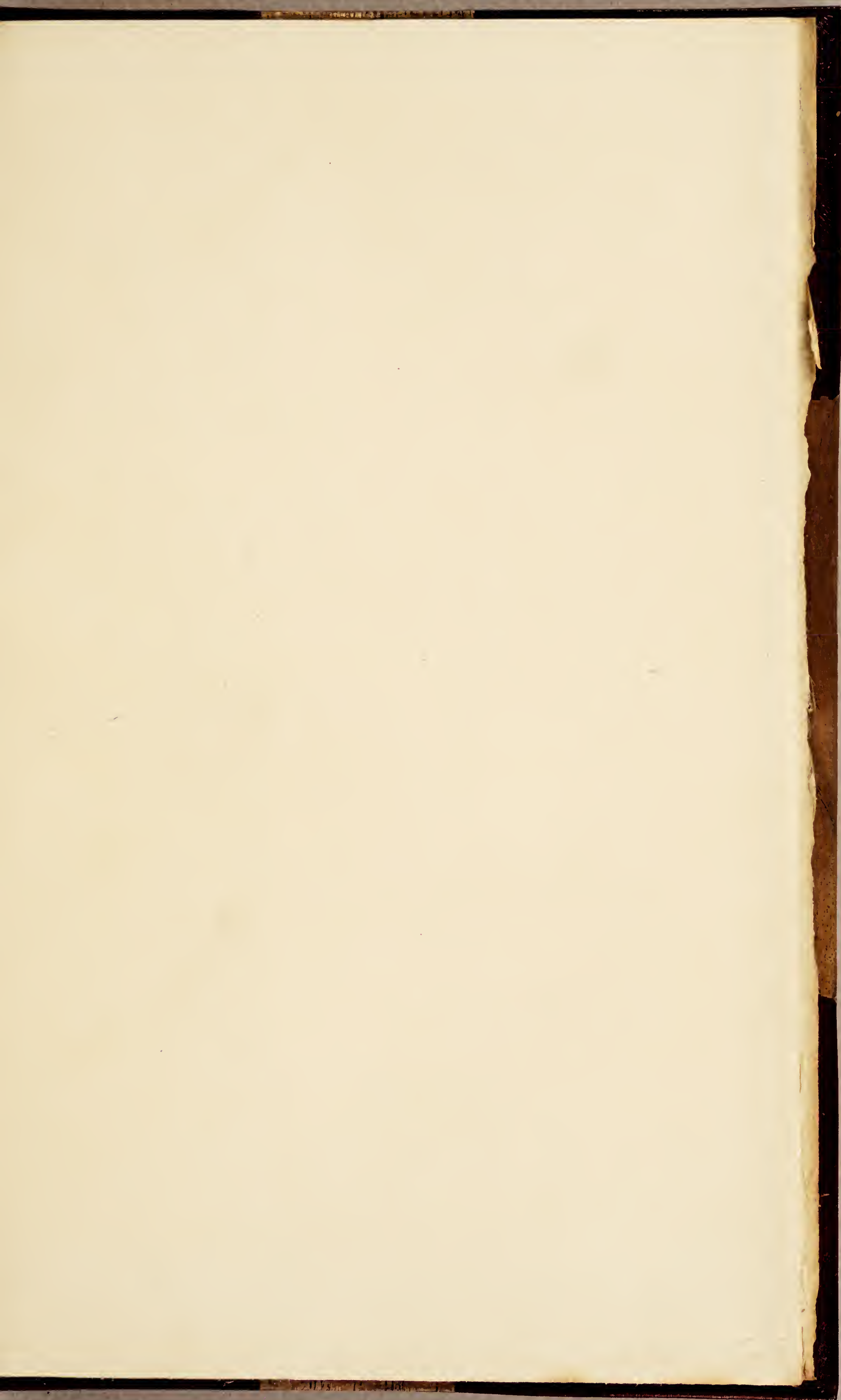
him there? What had he then to cover? Not Gibraltar, -surely.

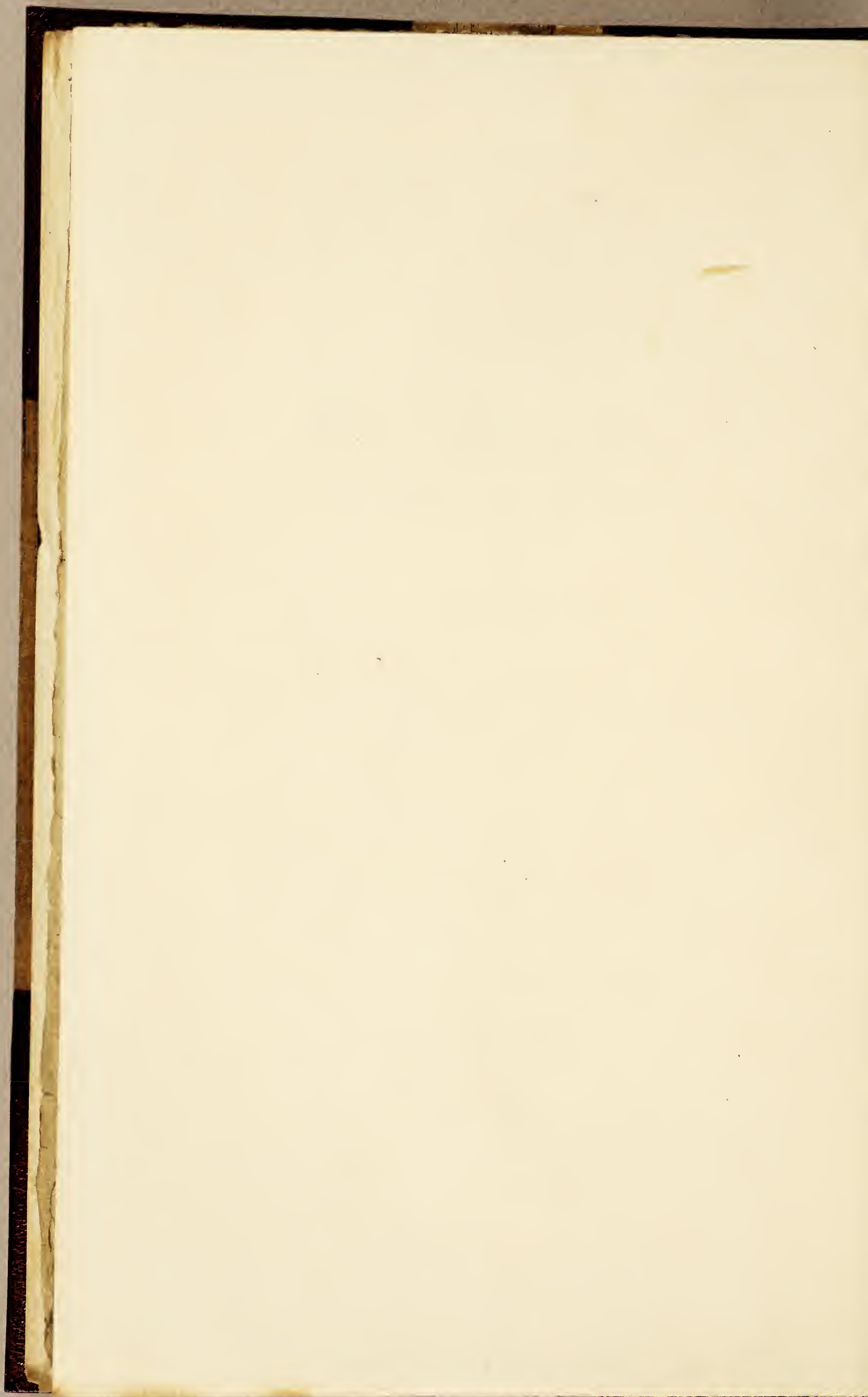
There is a thread of sophistry which runs through the whole of this pamphlet, but so flimzily spun, that it becomes a mere cobweb: and to use any further effort, either in untwisting or breaking it, would be lamentable waste, Gentlemen, both of your time and mine. The visible drift of all this silly artifice is, to divert the attention of the public from one important object, and to fix it on others; which, whether true or false, proved or disproved, will not have the smallest influence on Mr Byng's acquittal or condemnation.

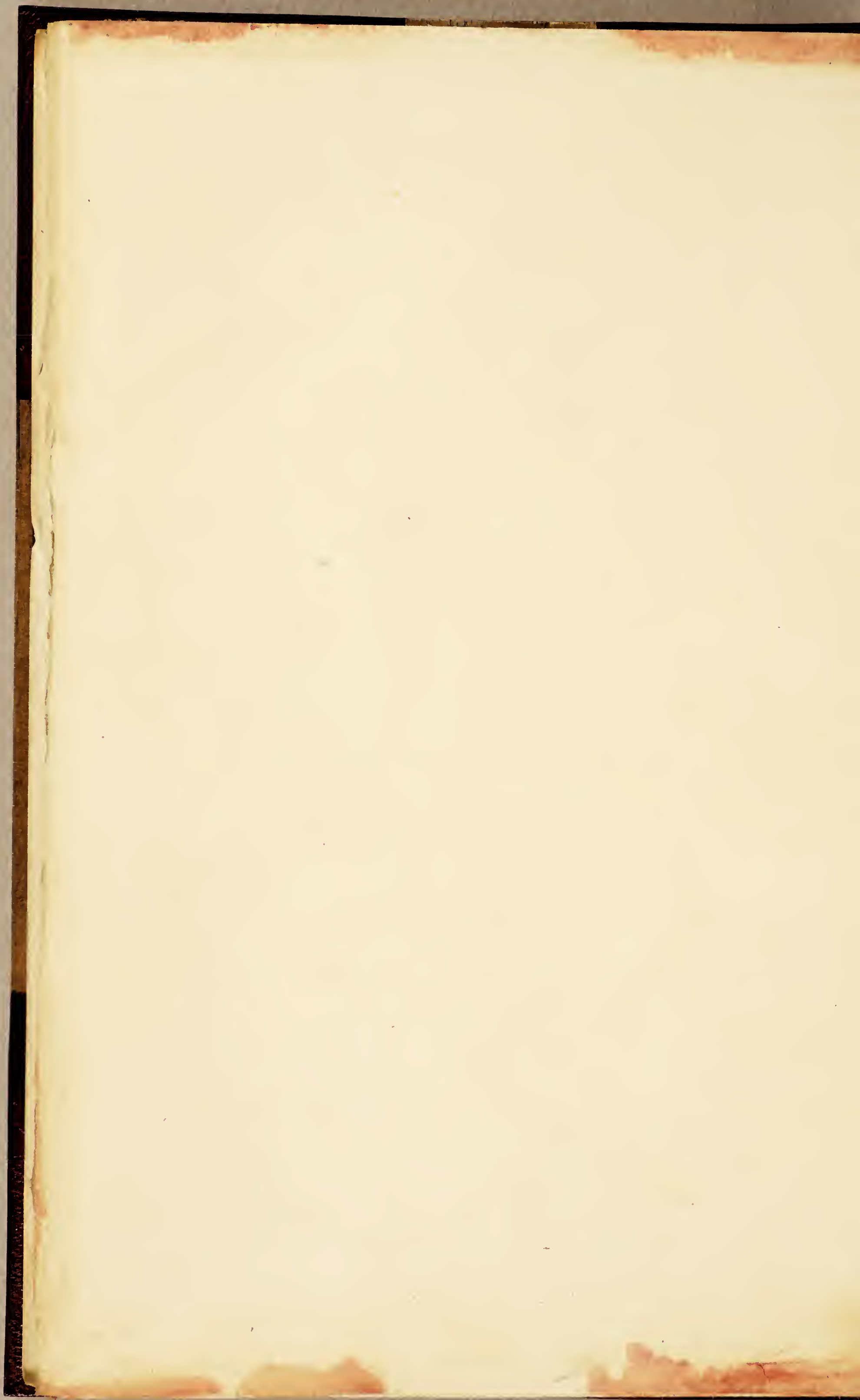
I am, with real truth and esteem,

GENTLEMEN,

Your most humble servant.







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